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RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/CM, CA/OCS/EP, OES/IHA, HHS FOR OGHA, CDC  
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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [CH](#) [HK](#) [KFLO](#) [KFLU](#)

SUBJECT: H1N1 FORCES MORE SCHOOL CLOSURES. HK MOVING  
TOWARDS TREATMENT-BASED APPROACH

REF: A. HONG KONG 935

[1](#)B. HONG KONG 1065

[1](#)C. HONG KONG 1371

[1](#)D. HONG KONG 1567

[1](#)1. Hong Kong health authorities instructed Hong Kong International School (HKIS),s Primary School division to close for seven days, due to increased student absences for influenza-like illness (ILI) symptoms. Although HKIS Primary School officials told U.S. Consulate staff that there have been over 100 student absences, Hong Kong health authorities officially announced 65 children, aged between four and 10, developed ILI symptoms since August 19. Four students were confirmed infected with H1N1 and one has been hospitalized. This closure follows HKIS Middle school,s closure last week.

Consulate General Hong Kong currently has 77 EFM students enrolled in schools in Hong Kong, of which 17 attend HKIS Middle School and 34 attend HKIS Primary Schools.

[1](#)2. Separately, Ying Wa College in Sham Shui Po was also closed after 21 boys, aged 11 and 13, developed ILI symptoms since August 23. No students have required hospitalization. The school was advised to postpone commencement of the academic year by seven days. All Hong Kong public schools were back in session this week. Health authorities anticipate as many as 100 schools will be hit by H1N1 outbreaks as the flu peaks. These school closures follow the new guidance published on August 24 by the Hong Kong Educational Bureau that states that schools should monitor the situation carefully, consult with health authorities, and take into account factors including number of confirmed infections and absentee rate of students from school.

[1](#)3. As of September 1, H1N1 cases in Hong Kong have risen to a total of 12,135. A total of six deaths have been reported. The latest involved a 65 year old man who went to the hospital due to shortness of breath, fever, and cough. He also had a history of asthma, pneumonia, and heart disease.

[1](#)4. Hong Kong health authorities have set up eight designated flu clinics (DFC) and have made repeated appeals to the public to not use emergency departments of public hospitals for ILI symptoms. Press reports that DFCs and emergency rooms have been flooded with patients with ILI symptoms, putting a strain on the healthcare system. As a result, a new treatment plan is under consideration, whereby the Hong Kong Hospital Authority will stop testing patients for H1N1, unless they do not respond to antivirals or need hospital care. Under this plan, H1N1 flu patients with mild symptoms will not be tested, reducing the number of laboratory tests from 2,000 a day to 1,000 in order to relieve the burden on Hong Kong government labs and staff. Even high risk patients, including young children, the elderly, and the chronically ill, as outpatients will no longer be tested for

H1N1 unless their conditions show no signs of improvement. Instead, patients will be given Tamiflu and asked to rest at home. All inpatients with ILI symptoms will continue to be tested. In addition, as it moves towards a treatment-based approach, Hong Kong health officials say that Hong Kong will soon stop daily reporting of the number of H1N1 cases.

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